DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 204 841 EA 013 733

TITLE	Roles and Relationships: School Boards and Superintendents.
INSTITUTION	American Association of School Administrators, Arlington, Va.; National School Boards Association, Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE	80
NOTE	13p.
AVAILABLE FROM	American Association of School Administrators, 1801 North Moore St., Arlington, VA 22209 (Stock No. 021-00204: $3.50).
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Administrator Responsibility; *Administrator Role; *Board Administrator Relationship; *Board of Education Role; Boards of Education; Elementary Secondary Education; *Superintendents

ABSTRACT

The roles and responsibilities of school boards and superintendents are different, but linked. School boards are primarily concerned with establishing policy and representing the educational interests of district constituents. Superintendents are charged with translating policies into administrative practice and with providing professional expertise to the district. The specific responsibilities of boards and superintendents and factors affecting their relationships are described briefly in this pamphlet. The authors also stress the importance of establishing a communications system and of stating the nature of the board-superintendent relationship in writing. (PGD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

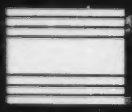
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

ED204841

SCHOOL BOARDS AND SUPERINTENDENTS



"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

W. Henry

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

A Joint Publication
of the American Association of School Administrators
and the National School Boards Association

EA 013 733

ROLES AND RELATIONSHIPS

SCHOOL BOARDS AND SUPERINTENDENTS

Reviewed and Approved by the Joint AASA-NSBA Committee

Published by
The American Association of School Administrators,
1801 North Moore Street, Arlington, Virginia 22209

Other Publications Reviewed and Approved by the Joint AASA-NSBA Committee:

Selecting a Superintendent

The Superintendent's Contract

Compensating the Superintendent

The Administrative Leadership Team

Evaluating the Superintendent

Goal Setting and Self Evaluation of School Boards

AASA Stock Number 021-00204

Library of Congress Card Number 80-70098

Copyright 1980
The American Association of School Administrators
Arlington, Virginia 22209

INTRODUCTION

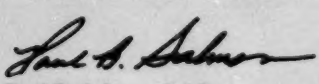
"Working together!" We talk about it. Sometimes we even succeed in doing it. But sometimes we pull in opposite directions. It happens in every organization.

Working together is especially important for those who serve our public schools. And the primary example for cooperation should come from the top . . . the relationship between the school board and the superintendent.

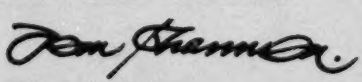
Basic to this relationship is an acceptance by the board and superintendent that the board is a policy making body and the superintendent is the chief executive officer. Since lines between policy and administration are sometimes unclear, teamwork is also essential.

Realizing the importance of the relationship between the superintendent and school board, the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) and the National School Boards Association (NSBA) have sought to further define those roles and relationships. This position statement was developed after months of analysis and discussion.

As a reflection of the spirit of "working together" that exists between school boards and superintendents, this statement was reviewed and recommended by the Joint AASA-NSBA Committee and approved by the NSBA Board of Directors and AASA Executive Committee. It is hoped that the spirit of this joint position statement will result in greater cooperation, increased synergy and an even better education for the children and adults . . . all learners . . . who attend the public schools of our nation.



Paul B. Salmon, Ed.D
Executive Director
American Association
of School Administrators



Thomas A. Shannon
Executive Director
National School Boards
Association

ROLES AND RELATIONSHIPS

A Joint Position Statement of the National School Boards Association (NSBA) and the American Association of School Administrators (AASA). This statement has been recommended by the Joint AASA-NSBA Committee.

Today, effective public education requires strong school boards and strong superintendents who willingly assume leadership roles. To an important degree, educational success is dependent upon a good working relationship between the school board and the chief administrative officer it employs.

Basic to this relationship is a clear understanding that the board and superintendent constitute a team. Neither can operate effectively without a thorough knowledge of and support for the other's role.

It is increasingly important for the board and superintendent to delineate their respective roles. A ***superintendent*** is expected to display excellence as an educational leader, to be politically sophisticated, to be aware of and active in legislative developments, and to have an extensive knowledge of federal and state laws. A ***school board*** is asked to be responsive to its constituencies in governance; sensitive to the special needs of all learners in the district; a more active advocate for learners to the people, other local governmental entities, and state and federal levels of government; and a vigorous ambassador explaining the instructional programs to the people.

To accomplish these tasks, the ***board*** must serve as a legislative body in the development and evaluation of policies. The ***superintendent*** must be primarily responsible for the administration of the school district in accordance with board policies.

The board and superintendent must recognize that the distinction between strictly legislative and strictly administrative functions is not al-

ways clear-cut. If ambiguity is to be kept to a minimum in the working relationship between the board and superintendent, each should be aware of three influences that bear on this important division of responsibility:

1. ***The nature of policy development and administration.*** Serving as a professional adviser to the school board is one of the key roles played by the superintendent. While the board is not bound to accept the superintendent's advice, it nonetheless should not establish policy without first consulting the superintendent, its chief professional adviser. In the same vein, the superintendent should not institute far reaching administrative procedures without first affording the board an opportunity to review proposed rules and their adherence to board policy. Moreover, the board should be given a regular opportunity to review existing administrative procedures to test whether they do conform to policy. The emphasis must be on communication . . . the sharing of information between board and superintendent. The process should not focus on approval to be sought or won, but on the development of mutual understanding.

2. ***The increasing influence of external factors on local school district governance and on the board-superintendent relationship.*** Legislative mandates, for instance, frequently require the board to adopt detailed rules in implementing new laws or mandated curriculum. And the superintendent must meet unanticipated events with actions that establish policy by precedent in areas in which the board has no formal written policy.

3. ***The discretionary authority boards grant their chief administrators.*** The board by law is responsible for school programs and operations. Nevertheless, all boards delegate some portion of that authority to the district superintendent. Without sufficient authority delegated from the board, the superintendent's ability to discharge responsibility is diminished. Where to draw the line of delegated authority is a matter each board and superintendent must determine individually and review periodically. Here is one guideline: The board must give the professional school administrator enough authority to carry out designated responsibilities, and the administrator must give the board adequate assurance that the job the board designated is being accomplished.

SCHOOL BOARDS: SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES

Within this general framework, school boards have these specific responsibilities:

- To delegate to the superintendent responsibility for all administrative functions, except those specifically reserved through board policy for the board chairperson. Those reserved areas might include: conducting board meetings and public hearings, approving the agenda and minutes and other activities incidental to, and associated with serving as presiding officer of the board.
- To support the superintendent fully in all decisions that conform to professional standards and board policy.
- To hold the superintendent responsible for the administration of the school through regular constructive written and oral evaluations of the superintendent's work. Effective evaluation is an ongoing effort and should be linked to goals established by the board with the assistance of the superintendent.
- To provide the superintendent with a comprehensive employment contract.
- To give the superintendent the benefit of the board's counsel in matters related to individual board members' expertise, familiarity with the local school system, and community interests.
- To hold all board meetings with the superintendent or a designee present.
- To consult with the superintendent on all matters, as they arise, that concern the school system and on which the board may take action.
- To develop a plan for board-superintendent communications.

- To channel communications with school employees that require action through the superintendent, and to refer all applications, complaints, and other communications, oral or written, first to the superintendent in order to assure that the district processes such communications in an effective, coordinated fashion and is responsive to students and patrons.
- To take action on matters only after hearing the recommendation of the superintendent.
- To establish a policy on the effective management of complaints.
- To provide the superintendent with sufficient administrative help, especially in the area of monitoring teaching and learning.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction ____ iv

Roles and Relationships ____ 1

School Boards: Specific Responsibilities ____ 3

Superintendents: Specific Responsibilities ____ 5

Communication a Key ____ 6

Acknowledgments ____ 7

SUPERINTENDENTS: SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES

In keeping with the division of effort, superintendents have these specific responsibilities:

- To serve as the board's chief executive officer and adviser.
- To serve as the school system's educational leader.
- To keep the board informed about school operations and programs.
- To keep the community informed about board policies, programs, and district procedures.
- To interpret the needs of the school system to the board.
- To present and recommend policy options along with specific recommendations to the board when circumstances require the board to adopt new policies or revise existing policies.
- To develop and inform the board of administrative procedures needed to implement board policy.
- To provide leadership for the district's educational programs.
- To develop an adequate program of school-community relations.
- To manage the district's day-to-day operations.
- To evaluate personnel and keep the board informed about evaluations.

COMMUNICATION A KEY

An efficient and well-understood system of communication between the school board and superintendent is vital to a successful working relationship, based upon the general responsibilities contained in this statement. The first step toward achieving this relationship takes place when a board and superintendent put in writing what they agree to be their respective roles and responsibilities.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

AASA wishes to acknowledge the contributions of The Joint AASA-NSBA Committee which reviewed the manuscript for this publication and made vital suggestions which have been incorporated into the text. Members of The Joint AASA-NSBA Committee include:

NSBA: Loretta Manwaring, C. R. (Bob) Marshall, Rayma C. Page, Thomas A. Shannon, Mack J. Spears, Jean S. Tufts

AASA: Elden M. Amundson, Abe L. Hammons, Jack K. Mawdsley, Richard D. Miller, Paul B. Salmon, William G. Stevenson

Roles and Relationships . . . School Boards and Superintendents was reviewed and approved by the NSBA Board of Directors and the AASA Executive Committee.

Staff members from both the National School Boards Association and the American Association of School Administrators were also involved in the development of this publication. NSBA Executive Director, Thomas A. Shannon and AASA Executive Director, Paul Salmon worked directly with the Joint Committee. Final editing and production were under the direction of AASA Associate Executive Director, Gary Marx.